



**National Education Knowledge Industry Association
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Testimony by:

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To

**The Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies**

**Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives**

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Good morning. My name is Wes Hoover. I serve as the president and CEO of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) in Austin, TX. This year I also serve as chair of the Board of Directors of the National Education Knowledge Industry Association (NEKIA). I speak on behalf of the members of NEKIA, whose members work to advance the development and use of research-based knowledge to improve the performance of our nation's K-12 students.

This morning I want to address three important points:

A greater investment is needed because of greater demand and under funded supply. If states, districts and schools are to be able to make evidence a critical part of school reform, as mandated and envisioned in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, they need robust structures in place that can help them base their practices on that evidence. Given that more than 25,000 U.S. public schools are not making adequate yearly progress under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, steps must be taken now to ensure that research-based education solutions are used in the classroom. Our nation's education research, development and dissemination system has historically been under funded and it simply does not have the resources to meet the current demand. In fact, the Department of Education spends less than one percent of its budget on research, development, and statistics. Education is a \$745 billion industry representing an estimated 7.2 percent of the gross domestic product. However, *only three cents for every hundred dollars* is spent on education research and development.

Now is the time for Congress to enhance and expand – not cut or dismantle – the federal system of education research, development, dissemination, and technical assistance.

Schools were not designed to meet the changing needs of today's youth. The system of federally supported education knowledge utilization programs – specifically the Regional Educational Labs, the Research and Development Centers, the Regional Technology in Education Consortia, the Eisenhower Regional Math and Science Education Consortia, the Comprehensive Assistance Centers, and the national clearinghouses – are uniquely positioned to make the critical connection with education providers to meet the tremendous needs for evidence-based practices to implement *No Child Left Behind* and the *Education Sciences Reform Act* and of course, ultimately, to help all children succeed.

NEKIA's members are addressing this capacity crisis. Indeed, building that capacity is at the core of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory's work in helping local districts and schools acquire the skills and knowledge needed to meet NCLB and ensure that every student learns. In Texas, as in the other states of the southwestern region, our largest current effort is the development and testing of the "Working Systemically Model"--a process and relevant tools used at all levels of the education system to improve student achievement, especially in the areas of reading and mathematics. This effort crosses five states and includes 60 local districts and schools. Last year, besides developing and testing the model, we also delivered training and technical assistance to 2750 educators in these sites.

To address this capacity crisis we hope Congress will double its investments in education knowledge utilization. Not only would increased investments help meet demand, they would also address a number of high priorities such as:

- Improving teacher quality by providing research based information on best practices to teacher training institutions as well as information and technical assistance to schools districts implementing professional development programs.
- Helping special populations of students meet state adequate yearly progress goals. These special populations include English language learners, special needs children, and students in rural areas.
- Working with educators to interpret and manage a variety of data about student performance and classroom instruction.
- Scaling up school improvement efforts at the local level so that reform efforts in single schools can expand to district wide initiatives.

In order to adequately respond to the capacity crisis and meet the high priorities I mentioned a moment ago, NEKIA proposes the following investments:

- \$89 million for the Regional Education Labs, an increase of \$22 million.
- \$50 million for the Research and Development Centers, an increase of \$25.7 million.
- \$9.8 million for the Regional Technology in Education Consortia, an increase of \$3.2 million.
- \$6.7 million for the Eisenhower National Math/Science Clearinghouse, an increase of \$1.8 million.
- \$19.8 million for the Math/Science Consortia, an increase of \$5 million.
- \$37 million for the Comprehensive Assistance Centers, an increase of \$9.3 million.

Unfortunately, many of these vital programs are at risk. The President's budget for fiscal year 2005 proposes to cut or eliminate funding for many of these programs. The cuts and eliminations total nearly \$100 million. The Administration proposed the same sorts of reductions last year. Fortunately, Congress acted in a bipartisan way to fund these programs. We hope you will do so again.

We are very heartened by the continuing interest Congress shows in our work. In fact, within the next few weeks, members of the House will introduce the Knowledge Utilization in Education Act, which is designed to ensure that education knowledge and research makes its way into the classroom to directly benefit teachers and children.

In closing, I thank you for the opportunity to provide you with testimony on the successes and needs of the federally supported system of education knowledge utilization. Because of you, the system is providing the research-based tools our children and teachers need to succeed. I hope that in fiscal year 2005 you will expand these investments to ensure even greater success for all our children.

